

£500 LAPTOPS

POUND STRETCHERS

You can buy anything from a powerful desktop replacement to a light ultra-portable for £500 these days. We test six budget laptops to help you bag a bargain

INTRODUCTION

Everyone loves a bargain, but shopping online for the best specs at the lowest prices could lead you to a laptop-shaped disaster. A poor screen or keyboard can ruin an otherwise excellent laptop, but these are qualities you can't judge by reading specs and looking at pictures. Even going to your local retailer and trying out a range of laptops for yourself won't help you get a measure of their battery life or whether the core components are well balanced.

As you're reading this magazine, you don't need to be told that the most reliable way to find the best-value products is to trust our expert reviews, based on extensive hands-on comparative testing. Great laptops for £500 are alive and well, and over the next six pages we'll tell you which ones they are.

Ben Pitt
IT Correspondent



ben@computershopper.co.uk

Choosing a... £500 Laptop

Entry-level laptops can be littered with compromises, but £500 no longer represents the absolute bargain basement. Modern processor speeds are such that any of the laptops in this month's Labs will comfortably run any mainstream Windows software, their hard disks are big enough for tens of thousands of MP3 tracks and digital photos, and their screens will make DVDs look fantastic. They all look smart and have widescreen displays with native resolutions of 1,280x800 pixels. They all include an eight-speed DVD writer that supports all types of writable DVD, plenty of USB2 ports and an ExpressCard/54 expansion slot.

However, they can't provide many of the luxuries we found in our Labs test of £700 laptops last month. None has HDMI or DVI outputs for connecting digitally to external displays, although analogue VGA outputs are standard across the board and a couple also include an S-video out for connecting to a TV. None supports the latest Draft-N wireless networking standard, but they all support 802.11b and g.

SAME DIFFERENCE

Despite their similarities, these laptops are all quite different from one another in various ways. Portability

is a key feature for a laptop PC. Five of the six models are similar in this respect, weighing around 2.7kg and measuring around 360mm along their longest edges. However, PC Nextday provided an ultra-portable model, which weighs just 2kg and measures 299mm. Most laptops rarely leave their owners' houses, but if you plan to do a lot of travelling with yours, this compact design would be a real benefit if it weren't for its poor battery life. One hour and 23 minutes in our light use test is less than half that of many of the other laptops here, and means that the PC Nextday laptop isn't really suited to an outward-bound life at all.

The quality of keyboards and mice is often a weak point in budget laptops, but we're delighted to see that the standard in this group is extremely high. However, some models still fare better than others. The biggest variation was in the keyboard quality, and this is an area in which the smaller system builders sadly failed to compete with the established big brands. The Eclipse laptop's keyboard feels squishy, while the PC Nextday's keyboard layout is cramped and caused us to make lots of mistakes while typing. Both models also generated more fan noise than the others, and the PC Nextday laptop got a little hot. On the upside, their screens competed well with the big brands' displays, and the PC



Nextday's screen showed smooth greyscales. Touch pad quality is important, too. The touch pads on the Eclipse and PC Nextday laptops are easy to use, but you should consider budgeting for a USB mouse if you want to use the Toshiba laptop for any length of time. Speaker quality varied widely. The Toshiba and Acer laptops sounded reasonable and the PC Nextday and Samsung models were awful, but even the best speakers are far from high-fidelity. If you want to listen to music from your laptop, you'll need to plug in external speakers or headphones.

PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

There are two ways to think about performance in a budget laptop. One is that none of these models is particularly fast, and that a 26 per cent increase in power (the difference between the slowest and fastest in our Windows benchmarks) won't make much difference when you're typing a letter or browsing the web. If you plan to use your laptop only for this kind of task, we would largely go along with this school of thought, although a faster model might cope better with future developments in web design or updates to Windows Vista. On the other hand, if you want to edit photos or video or produce music, all of these laptops make it possible but the faster ones will handle these tasks more quickly.

Getting the balance of core components is important, too. HP includes only 1GB of RAM,

but this leaves enough cash in the budget for a Core 2 Duo T7250 processor, which is a fast chip by any standards. Others have paired a slower processor with 2GB of RAM, which makes more sense if you'll be running multiple applications that aren't particularly demanding. However, if you want the best of both worlds but can't quite afford it, choosing 1GB of RAM and a faster processor is preferable, as it's relatively easy to insert another RAM module later.

Hard disk capacity doesn't directly affect performance, but for creative and multimedia tasks, bigger is most definitely better, especially

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TOSHIBA Satellite A200-1VG

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as you can't add a second internal disk, and attaching an external one will make a laptop less portable.

Games performance is almost an irrelevant consideration on low-cost laptops such as these. Even the fastest 3D performer, Eclipse's Zeus i525n84, doesn't have enough graphics processing power to handle the latest 3D games properly, even though it can technically run them. The only reason to consider Eclipse's laptop is if you have a few old games that you'd like to continue playing, perhaps in multiplayer mode networked to your desktop PC.

Panoramic views Choosing a version of Vista

Almost every PC and notebook we review comes with Windows Vista Home Premium installed, but this month's award winner runs Vista Business. This may sound unsuitable for home use, but for most people it won't make much difference. Both versions include Vista's powerful search facilities, improved security, the glass-effect Aero desktop and Windows Mobility Center, which brings together various notebook-oriented control panels.

Where the versions differ is in the add-on modules they come with. Home Premium comes with Media Center, which provides

entertainment features such as DVD and music playback, TV recording and timeshifting. However, without a remote control and a TV card, it offers little more than Windows Media Player 11. Home Premium also includes a clutch of simple games, basic DVD-authoring software and support for HDV cameras in Windows Movie Maker HD.

Vista Business's modules include more powerful backup tools with the ability to clone an entire disk partition, faxing and scanning tools, as well as Remote Desktop Connection for taking control of your PC over a network.



ACER Aspire 4920

★★★★★

£480 inc VAT
From www.acerdirect.co.uk

Acer's Aspire 4920 has a modest processor but fair battery life and plenty of extra features.

FEATURES

The 4920's curvy design makes it look friendly rather than businesslike. The 14.1in screen is one of the smallest displays in the group, but it has the same 1,280x800-pixel resolution. Its horizontal viewing angles are fairly narrow, so you need to view it head on to prevent darker colours looking bleached out. The laptop isn't much smaller than those with 15.4in screens, and it's the fattest model on test. However, the fans remain almost silent and the base stays cool even with the processor going at full tilt.

The webcam built into the lid produced far smoother frame rates and richer colours than the Eclipse's webcam. We're not convinced by the claims of virtual surround sound from the stereo speakers, but they sounded better than most. Dedicated buttons launch and control Windows Media Player and the bundled Arcade Deluxe software, which imitates Windows Media Center and adds extra features such as video capture. The 4920 has four USB2 ports, a multi-format card reader, an S-video output and a FireWire port, which is ideal for capturing video from MiniDV cameras, although a bigger hard disk would be preferable for video editing.

PERFORMANCE

With the joint-slowest processor in the group, the 4920 was never going to excel in our benchmarks, but a score of 123 overall in our 2D tests is plenty for office and entertainment software, and even for video and photo editing. With 2GB of RAM it should be able to handle such tasks and run several applications at once. However, the Intel graphics aren't designed for 3D games. Battery life is above average in this group at two hours and 53 minutes.

VERDICT

The Aspire 4920 isn't the fastest laptop in the group, but some useful features make it great for home use.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Runs very cool and quietly
- ✓ Plenty of welcome extras
- ✗ Not particularly quick

GENERAL-PURPOSE LAPTOP Intel Core 2 Duo T5250, 2GB RAM, 120GB disk, Intel GMA X3100 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 14.1in widescreen LCD, 2.6kg
PART CODE LX.AKU0X.063
DETAILS www.acer.co.uk



ECLIPSE Zeus i525n84

★★★★★

£500 inc VAT
From Eclipse Computers
08707 456 000

Eclipse's Zeus has the best games performance in the group, but that's not saying much.

FEATURES

The Zeus's chassis looks as smart and feels as sturdy as those of the other laptops, but it's by far the noisiest laptop in the group when given a heavy workload. Its keyboard feels spongy, but the layout is sensible and the touch pad is accurate. Like all the laptops here except HP's 6720s, the Zeus's screen has a glossy finish. This flatters photos and video, but poor vertical viewing angles and strong reflections make it less than ideal for creative graphics work.

A webcam is integrated into the lid above the screen, and although it's not as high quality as the one in Acer's Aspire, it's fine for video calls. The Zeus is the only laptop in the group to come with a Windows installation DVD, so you don't lose any disk space to a hidden restore partition.

PERFORMANCE

The Zeus is one of three laptops in the group with a relatively slow 1.5GHz processor and has just 1GB of RAM. It came last in all our Windows benchmarks except the video-encoding test, where it narrowly beat Acer's Aspire. The laptop's Nvidia GeForce 8400M G graphics are unique here in having 128MB of dedicated graphics memory. It gained the best result in Call of Duty 2, but 7.7fps is still unplayable, as was the 17.2fps result it achieved at minimal graphics settings. This laptop will handle games from a couple of years ago, but it's not a gaming machine. Its battery life is the second-worst in the group, managing only an hour and a half of light use.

VERDICT

Eclipse's Zeus i525n84 has a poor keyboard, a noisy cooling fan, below-average performance in Windows applications and short battery life. If you want to play older games, we'd recommend Samsung's superior R60.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Some 3D performance
- ✗ Disappointing keyboard; only 1GB of RAM
- ✗ Slow Windows performance; poor battery life

GENERAL-PURPOSE LAPTOP Intel Core 2 Duo T5250, 1GB RAM, 120GB disk, Nvidia GeForce 8400M G graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.7kg
PART CODE i525n84
DETAILS www.eclipsecomputers.com



HP Compaq 6720s

★★★★★

£490 inc VAT
From www.laptopsdirect.co.uk



The Compaq 6720s's business-oriented features won't please everyone, but this is the best all-round laptop in the group.

FEATURES

While the other laptops here come with Windows Vista Home Premium, the HP has Vista Business. For an explanation of the main differences, see the box on page 75. The screen is more business- than home-oriented, too, as it's the only one that doesn't have a glossy finish. This means that blacks aren't as dark and whites aren't quite as white as on the other screens, but it doesn't suffer from the strong reflections that can make the other screens hard to see when outdoors or under ceiling lights. The keyboard is firm and responsive, and the touch pad is the best here.

The Compaq 6720s has a 160GB hard disk, which is one of the largest in the group. 10GB of the disk is reserved for a restore partition, as the 6720s doesn't come with any restore discs. This is the only laptop with Bluetooth, so you can connect wirelessly to a mobile phone.

PERFORMANCE

The 6720s's 2GHz Core 2 Duo processor is the fastest in the group, and gave its scores in our graphics-editing and video-encoding benchmarks a significant boost. The laptop was the fastest in the group in all our benchmarks apart from multitasking, where its 1GB of memory hampered its performance. It was still the joint-fastest in this benchmark, and easily came top overall with 151. Intel's integrated graphics don't stand a chance of running the latest 3D games, but this is hardly a factor at this price. Battery life is average for the group at two hours and 46 minutes.

VERDICT

HP's Compaq 6720s isn't bursting with alluring features, but its seriously fast Windows performance and good keyboard and touch pad are impressive for the price. It's a Best Buy.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Fast Windows performance
- ✓ Excellent touch pad and keyboard
- ✗ Only 1GB of RAM

GENERAL-PURPOSE LAPTOP Intel Core 2 Duo T7250, 1GB RAM, 160GB disk, Intel GMA X3100 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.6kg
PART CODE GR649ET
DETAILS www.hp.co.uk



PC NEXTDAY Zoostorm 6-4010 12.1" Laptop

★★★★

£504 inc VAT

From www.pcnextday.co.uk

The Zoostorm 6-4010 is an ultra-portable laptop at an amazing price. It came close to winning this group test but let itself down with an awkward keyboard and poor battery life.

FEATURES

Weighing just 2kg, this laptop slips into the ultra-portable category. Ultra-portables tend to be expensive, so as the Zoostorm costs just £504 we expected to see some compromises. However, it has some impressive components, with a great processor and RAM combination and a huge 250GB hard disk. The screen is fairly small at 12.1in but has the same 1,280x800 resolution as the others in the group. However, the keyboard is smaller too, which is a more serious problem. There are no dedicated Page Up, Page Down, Home and End keys and the full stop and comma buttons are cramped, making it hard to touch-type reliably. This alone is enough to put us off. The glossy finish looks great but picks up fingerprints easily, and the speakers sound atrocious. We found that the base got quite hot, which could be uncomfortable when using it on your lap.

PERFORMANCE

The Zoostorm's 1.66GHz Core 2 Duo processor and 2GB of RAM is a powerful combination and will easily run any business or multimedia software, as demonstrated by a good overall score of 131 in our application benchmarks. Its SiS graphics chipset is no good for 3D games, and the Zoostorm managed just 1.1fps in our Call of Duty 2 test, but no-one buys an ultra-portable laptop for games. However, battery life is crucial, and the Zoostorm's score of one hour and 23 minutes in light use means it is practically useless for working on the move.

VERDICT

PC Nextday has put some great components in a small chassis, but the Zoostorm's cramped keyboard and poor battery life let it down.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Very cheap for an ultra-portable
- ✗ Poor battery life
- ✗ Poor keyboard layout

ULTRA-PORTABLE LAPTOP Intel Core 2 Duo T5450, 2GB RAM, 250GB disk, SiS Mirage 3+ graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 12.1in widescreen LCD, 2.0kg
PART CODE 6-4010
DETAILS www.pcnextday.co.uk



SAMSUNG R60

★★★★★

£485 inc VAT

From www.cclonline.com

We first saw Samsung's R60 in our Laptop Price Test (*Labs, Shopper 239*). This latest model has an updated specification but costs around the same and remains a fine laptop.

FEATURES

With its glossy lid and matt-black keyboard, touch pad and keyboard surround, the R60 looks elegant and businesslike. The keyboard and touch pad are both easy to use. As with nearly all the laptops here, the screen's glossy finish looks great but can cause problems with reflections. Otherwise, the laptop has everything we would expect, including an eight-speed DVD writer, SD card reader, 802.11g wireless networking and three USB ports. The only extra is a button to launch Samsung's Media Center-style software. This is a fairly basic program for organising your audio, video and image files, but we can't see who would use it over Vista Home Premium's more powerful Media Center. The 120GB hard disk is divided into two 50GB partitions, one for the operating system and one for data, with the remaining 10GB of formatted capacity devoted to a system restore partition.

PERFORMANCE

An overall score of 133 in our application benchmarks places the R60 second in the group for 2D performance, thanks to a 1.66GHz Core 2 Duo processor and 2GB of RAM. The graphics chip can't cope with modern 3D games, scoring just 5.3fps in Call of Duty 2, but it should be able to handle older titles. Battery life was the best here at three hours and 10 minutes in our light-usage test.

VERDICT

The R60 is a good all-round laptop, and looks more expensive than its £485 price would suggest. It also has the best battery life in the group, and is the only laptop here that's suitable for use on the move. It's overshadowed by HP's Compaq 6720s, though, which is far faster and has a bigger hard disk.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Long battery life
- ✓ Some 3D performance
- ✗ Slower than HP's Compaq 6720s in applications

GENERAL-PURPOSE LAPTOP Intel Core 2 Duo T5450, 2GB RAM, 120GB disk, ATI Radeon Xpress 1250 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.6kg
PART CODE NP-R60FY05/SUK
DETAILS www.samsung.com/uk



TOSHIBA Satellite A200-1VG

★★★★★

£499 inc VAT

From www.johnlewis.com

Toshiba's A200 is an impressive laptop for the price, but the vague touch pad lets it down.

FEATURES

The Satellite has the best screen, keyboard and speakers in the group. The glossy screen produces significantly richer colours than any other here and is evenly lit. The keyboard feels firm and responsive and is well laid out, and the speakers manage to make music sound vaguely enjoyable, which is rare for a laptop. However, considering Toshiba's attention to ergonomics, the touch pad is disappointing. The pointer lurches round the screen, making it hard to click on the icon or button you want. Turning down the mouse sensitivity in Windows eased the problem but didn't solve it.

The A200's 120GB hard disk should suffice unless you plan to edit video, make music or store masses of photos. It has more ports than the other laptops bar Acer's Aspire, with four USB2 ports, S-video out and FireWire. The memory card reader supports Secure Digital, xD and Memory Stick Pro, but not the newer Memory Stick Duo cards that current Sony devices use. A padded case is included, and if you buy from John Lewis, the laptop comes with the store's standard two-year warranty.

PERFORMANCE

The A200-1VG has the joint-slowest processor here, but with a score of 123 overall in our 2D benchmarks, there are few Windows applications that it can't handle. The laptop's 2GB of RAM will help when editing video or photos and when running multiple applications. However, the Intel graphics can't cope with recent 3D games. Battery life is average for the group at two hours and 31 minutes, but still not really good enough for use on the move.

VERDICT

If screen and keyboard quality is more important than performance, the Toshiba is an excellent choice, but the poor touch pad prevents it winning an award.

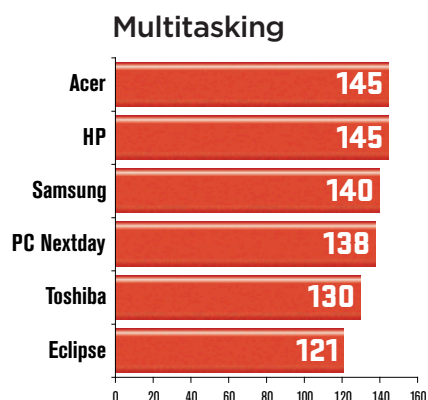
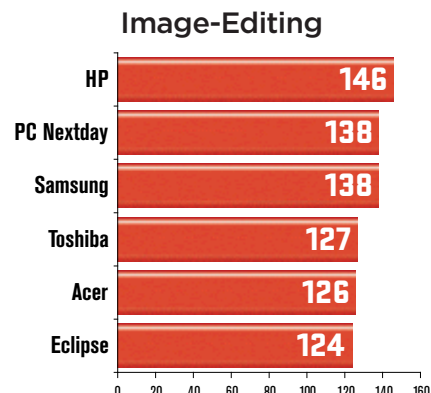
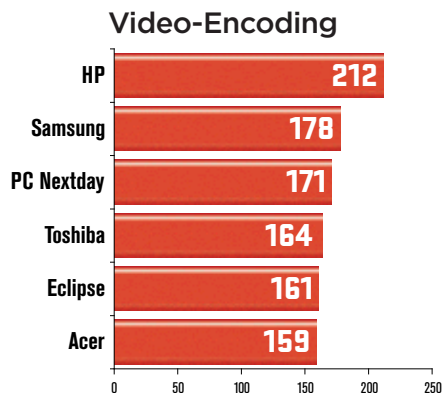
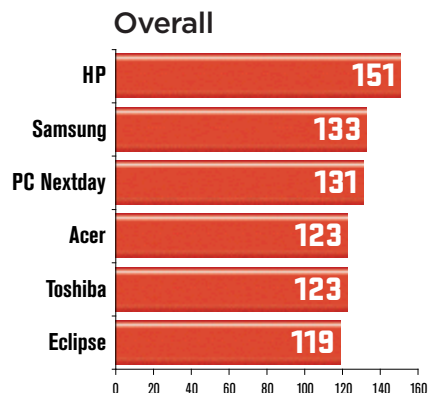
SUMMARY

- ✓ Excellent screen and keyboard
- ✓ Reasonable speakers
- ✗ Touch pad is a little unpredictable

GENERAL-PURPOSE LAPTOP Intel Core 2 Duo T5250, 2GB RAM, 120GB disk, Intel GMA X3100 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.7kg
PART CODE PSAE3E-045018EN
DETAILS www.toshiba.co.uk

BENCHMARKS

2D Performance Shopper application tests



Computer Shopper's 2D benchmarks are designed to show how PCs stand up to the toughest tasks Windows can throw at them. Today's PCs have no problem running office applications such as Word and Excel, so we have chosen to focus our tests on areas where you could experience difficulties.

There are four scripts. Encoding a video to MPEG2 format is an extremely processor-intensive task that anyone interested in transferring home videos to DVD will have to tackle. Our image-editing test simulates a session of photo enhancement using Paint Shop Pro X, culminating with the composition of a panorama from a set of snaps. In our third test, a set of audio files is ripped to MP3 format. Finally, the multitasking benchmark

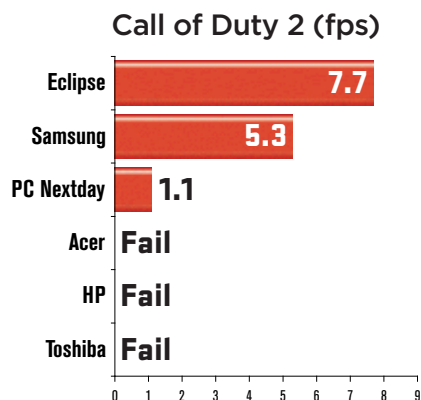


SETTINGS We run our application tests at the notebook's native resolution in 32-bit colour
WEB www.computershopper.co.uk

tests the real-life benefits of Hyper-Threaded and dual-core processors. This test compresses a DVD for playback on a Pocket PC at the same time as running our image-editing test.

Figures are relative to a reference Evesham Athlon 64 3500+, which scores 100 in all tests.

3D Performance Call of Duty 2

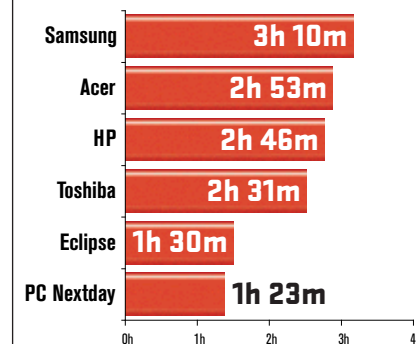


SETTINGS
 1,024x768
 resolution, high
 quality, 4x AA
WEB www.futuremark.com

Call of Duty 2 uses DirectX and is one of the most demanding games available. With a wide range of effects and frenetic action, it tests every aspect of graphics performance.

A good score here indicates that a PC should cope with any graphically intense 3D game coming on to the market today.

Battery life Run time



Our battery test involves light browser use with the screen at its medium brightness setting.

Labs verdict £500 laptops

Buying a low-cost notebook is often a process of balancing compromises, but this month's Labs proves that a budget of just £500 is enough to keep compromise at bay. Not every manufacturer managed it, though, and Eclipse and PC Nextday spoil their chances with poor keyboards and battery life.

Of the remaining four notebooks, each has a high-quality screen, keyboard and touch pad, although the Toshiba excelled with the first two and fell slightly behind in the latter. Its touch pad isn't disastrous, but it's enough

to prevent us giving it an unreserved recommendation, despite plenty of other excellent attributes.

Choosing between the remaining three is largely a matter of personal priorities and taste. The Samsung has the longest battery life, while the Acer has a FireWire port and an extra USB port plus various other multimedia features. In the end, though, the HP Compaq 6720s's superior performance makes it our favourite. None of these notebooks offers amazing performance, and yet all are more than up to



the demands of general office, multimedia and even creative tasks. However, the HP's more powerful processor means you'll get that little bit extra done each day, which is enough to earn it a Best Buy award.

£500 LAPTOPS



MANUFACTURER	ACER	ECLIPSE	HP	PC NEXTDAY	SAMSUNG	TOSHIBA
Model	Aspire 4920	Zeus i525n84	Compaq 6720s	Zoostorm 6-4010 12.1" Laptop	R60	Satellite A200-1VG
Rating	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Processor	Intel Core 2 Duo T5250	Intel Core 2 Duo T5250	Intel Core 2 Duo T7250	Intel Core 2 Duo T5450	Intel Core 2 Duo T5450	Intel Core 2 Duo T5250
Speed	1.5GHz	1.5GHz	2.0GHz	1.66GHz	1.66GHz	1.5GHz
Memory installed	2GB	1GB	1GB	2GB	2GB	2GB
Memory slots (free)	2 (0)	3 (2)	2 (1)	2 (0)	2 (0)	2 (0)
Max memory	4GB	2GB	4GB	4GB	4GB	4GB
BIOS	Phoenix	Phoenix	HP	Phoenix	Phoenix	Toshiba
Dimensions (HxWxD)	43x349x253mm	35x360x267mm	32x358x267mm	32x299x223mm	35x358x252mm	40x362x268mm
Weight	2.6kg	2.7kg	2.6kg	2.0kg	2.6kg	2.7kg
Sound	RealTek HD Audio	VIA HD Audio	SoundMax HD Audio	RealTek HD Audio	RealTek HD Audio	RealTek HD Audio
Pointing device	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad
DISPLAY						
Screen size	14.1in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	12.1in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD
Graphics adaptor	Intel GMA X3100	Nvidia GeForce 8400M G	Intel GMA X3100	SiS Mirage 3+	ATI Radeon Xpress 1250	Intel GMA X3100
Graphics outputs	VGA, S-video	VGA	VGA	VGA	VGA	VGA, S-video
Graphics memory	128MB shared	128MB dedicated	256MB shared	128MB shared	256MB shared	128MB shared
Native resolution	1,280x800	1,280x800	1,280x800	1,280x800	1,280x800	1,280x800
STORAGE						
Hard disk (available)	120GB (99GB)	120GB (112GB)	160GB (140GB)	250GB (198GB)	120GB (102GB)	120GB (110GB)
Optical drive model	Optiarc AD-7560A	TSST SN-S082H	Matshita UJ-861H	Optiarc AD-7530B	TSST TS-L632H	TSST TS-L632D
Optical drive type	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL
PORTS AND EXPANSION						
USB2 ports	4	3	3	3	3	4
FireWire	1	0	0	0	0	1
Infrared port	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Bluetooth	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Networking	10/100/1,000, 802.11a/b/g	10/100, 802.11b/g	10/100, 802.11a/b/g	10/100/1,000, 802.11b/g	10/100, 802.11b/g	10/100, 802.11a/b/g
PC Card slots	1x ExpressCard/54	1x ExpressCard/54	1x ExpressCard/54	1x ExpressCard/54	1x ExpressCard/54	1x ExpressCard/54
Modem	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legacy ports	None	None	None	None	None	None
Memory card reader	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro, xD	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro, xD
Other ports	None	None	None	None	None	None
MISCELLANEOUS						
Carrying case	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Direct CD control	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Operating system	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Business	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Home Premium
Operating system restore option	Restore partition	Windows disc	Restore partition	Restore partition	Restore partition, restore disc	Restore disc
Software included	CyberLink PowerProducer, NTI CD-Maker	Nero Express 7 Essentials	Roxio Creator 9 Basic	CyberLink PowerDVD 7, Nero 7 Essentials	CyberLink PowerDVD 7	Microsoft Works 8.5
Other standard accessories	Webcam	Webcam	None	None	None	None
Optional extras (inc VAT)	None	None	None	None	None	None
BUYING INFORMATION						
Company founded	Notebook Division 1985	1993	1939	1993	1971	1939
Employees	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	140,000	75	Not disclosed	Not disclosed
Tech support staff	Not disclosed	7	Not disclosed	24	Not disclosed	Not disclosed
Tech support times	9am-6pm Mon-Fri	9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri	8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri	9am-6pm Mon-Fri	9am-5pm Mon-Fri	8am-6pm Mon-Fri
Parts and labour warranty	One year RTB	One year RTB	One year collect and return	One year RTB	One year collect and return	One year RTB (two year return to retailer with John Lewis)
Price inc VAT	£480	£500	£490	£504	£485	£499
Price ex VAT	£408	£426	£417	£425	£419	£425
Details	www.acer.co.uk	www.eclipsecomputers.com	www.hp.co.uk	www.pcnextday.co.uk	www.samsung.com/uk	www.toshiba.co.uk
Supplier	www.acerdirect.co.uk	Eclipse Computers 08707 456 000	www.laptopsdirect.co.uk	www.pcnextday.co.uk	www.cclonline.com	www.johnlewis.com
Part code	LX.AKU0X.063	I525n84	GR649ET	6-4010	NP-R60FY05/SUK	PSAE3E-045018EN